

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM RELEASE IN FULL



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CIA and the Investigations of the Assassination of President Kennedy

1. From the day of the assassination of President Kennedy by Lee Harvey Oswald, and in support of the various inquiries that have been conducted subsequently, CIA has contributed to the considerations of the various investigative authorities.

2. Immediately following President Kennedy's assassination on 22 November 1963, CIA conducted an intensive inquiry into information that it had concerning Lee Harvey Oswald. A number of overseas stations were tasked to provide such information as they might have, with the station in Mexico City receiving special attention because of Oswald's visit there from 27 September through 3 October 1963. With the appointment of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy (the Warren Commission) CIA functioned in support of that investigation. CIA reporting was provided to the FBI, and extensive materials were supplied to the Warren Commission in response to its various requests and lines of inquiry.

3. The next full-scale investigations were conducted in 1975. The first of these was by the Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States (the Rockefeller Commission). Staff members were given access to Agency files concerning Oswald and the Warren Commission investigation. A number of special studies were prepared for the Rockefeller Commission on questions of special interest. The final report of the Rockefeller Commission devoted a chapter to Allegations Concerning the Assassination of President Kennedy (Chapter 19). That chapter noted that allegations had been made that the CIA participated in the assassination of President Kennedy and "concluded there was no credible evidence of any CIA involvement."

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4. Also in 1975 the U.S. Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee) conducted a study of alleged assassination plots involving foreign leaders, on which an interim report was published on 20 November 1975. The Church Committee also conducted a study of the performance of the intelligence agencies during the investigation by the Warren Commission, on which it published a report dated 23 April 1976 (The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies). Various questions raised in this report have led to an extensive research effort by CIA in an attempt to address those unresolved questions on which the Agency has some record. This research has proved a major undertaking which is still in process; an interim report is presently being prepared.

5. In September 1976, the House of Representatives approved the formation of a Select Committee on Assassinations, originally chaired by Representative Downing who was succeeded by Representative Gonzalez at the beginning of the current session. The Committee's staff, headed by Chief Counsel and Staff Director Richard A. Sprague, conducted some brief preliminary investigations at the end of the last session of Congress and has issued a preliminary report. This brief report was principally designed to provide the basis for approval by the full House of the continuation of the Committee and for a full staff and budget. The House has voted a two-month extension at a reduced budget and the Committee continues its dual investigations of the assassinations of President Kennedy and Reverend Martin Luther King.

6. CIA has had a number of preliminary meetings with Mr. Sprague concerning working arrangements for access to classified information, including security standards and practice. Additionally, very limited classified information has been made available to Mr. Sprague bearing on issues selected for preliminary investigation. Pending completion of working arrangements, material released by CIA in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has been passed to Mr. Sprague. An extensive review of these materials has been underway since April 1976, for FOIA release; as additional documents are approved for release, copies will be delivered to Mr. Sprague. As soon as working arrangements are completed, and the Select Committee on Assassinations staff is organized, it is expected that committee staff members will have access to Agency files at CIA. At this time there are no outstanding requests from the Committee.